



State of Tennessee
Department of State
Tennessee State Library and Archives
403 Seventh Avenue North
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0312

FUSSELL, JOSEPH H.
(1836-1915)
PAPERS
1809-1921

Processed by:

James W. Campbell
Archival Technical Services

Accession Number: 232
Date Completed: August 20, 1959
Location: I-B-3

INTRODUCTION

The Fussell Collection, composed of documents, correspondence, pamphlets, maps, and two valuable scrapbooks compiled by Mrs. Joseph H. Fussell, was given to the Tennessee State Library and Archives by Mrs. J.H. Fussell, November 10, 1922.

The materials in this finding aid measure .40 linear feet. There are no restrictions on the materials. Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the Joseph H. Fussell Papers may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Fussell Collection, numbering approximately 125 items, is basically composed of scrapbooks and pamphlets on the subjects of temperance and the State debt. There are also a few letters, speeches, and old indentures. The inclusive dates of the collection range from 1808 to 1921, but the majority of the items fall within the 1880's.

The collection contains two scrapbooks belonging to Judge J.H., which are concerned with his participation in the State gubernatorial election of 1882 and with his temperance activities. The indentures deal with land transactions in Maury County from 1808-1850. They are mainly concerned with transactions of the Bledsoe and Porter families. Also in the Fussell collection are five maps of Columbia, Tennessee, one Maury County plat, and one 1873 Santa Fe, Tennessee map showing land owners. The letters and speeches in the collection deal with religious, temperance, and Civic matters. The collection's pamphlets are divided into three subject groups, one on miscellaneous matters, one on the Tennessee State debt, and one on the prohibition issue.

The Fussell Collection is significant for the light it sheds upon the political repercussions brought about by the State debts accumulated through the sale of bonds for the construction of railroads and turnpike before the Civil War. The collection also depicts the divided condition of the Democratic party in the 1880's. Finally, it gives a picture of the fortunes and difficulties of the early prohibition movement in Tennessee.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Joseph H. Fussell

Joseph H. Fussell (1836-1915) of Maury County, Tennessee, an attorney, soldier, politician, reformer, and a noted leader of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, was one of Tennessee's early outstanding temperance leaders. From his youth, Joseph Fussell displayed a spirit of public dedication. He tried to enlist in the army at the age of eleven in order to fight in the Mexican War. He was educated at old Jackson College in Maury County where he received a law degree. At the beginning of the Civil War, he enlisted in Forrest's Cavalry. During his four years of service and numerous engagements, he rose through the ranks of service from the grade of private to captain, of Company G, 1st Tennessee Cavalry, C.S.A. After the war, he began his law practice in Maury County and married Miss Margarette Roberts in 1873.

He began his political career in 1870 when he was elected Attorney General for his district. He became prominent in state politics in 1882. When the "Sky-Blue" faction of the Democratic party nominated him for governor, the "Sky-Blues" sought to honor the whole of the state debt while the regular democrats lead by W.B. Bate favored the repudiation of part of the debt. In 1898, Fussell ran for judge of the 11th Circuit and 1890 he ran as a prohibitionist candidate for Congress. In 1901, he was a nominee for state senator. In every instance from 1882 on, Fussell was defeated, mainly because of his ardent stand on temperance.

Fussell played a prominent role in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. As a ruling elder, he actively opposed the unification of the Cumberland Presbyterian with the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. As a prohibitionist, Fussell made many speeches and attended the National temperance conventions. He was the first prohibition candidate for Governor and gallantly fought for a state prohibition amendment.

CONTAINER LIST

Box 1

1. Documents – Indentures, 1808-1914
2. Letters and Speeches, 1882-1906
3. Maps
 - a. Columbia, Tennessee, undated
 - b. Columbia, Tennessee, undated
 - c. Columbia, Tennessee, undated
 - d. Columbia, Tennessee, undated
 - e. Columbia, Tennessee, undated
 - f. “Platt of Santa Fe [Tennessee] at the time of the Erwin Fitzgerald difficulty.
May, 24, 1873
 - g. Grant # 145 [unknown location]
4. Pamphlets – Alcoholism, 1879-1884
 - a. “Use of Alcoholic Liquors”
 - b. “Liberty and Prohibition”
 - c. “The Effect of Alcoholic Liquors”
 - d. “Alcohol and its Effects”
5. Pamphlets – Miscellaneous, 1879-1883
 - a. “Chinese Immigration” 1882
 - b. Commissioners Report on Indebtedness of Alabama, 1879
 - c. “Cumberland Almanac” 1882
 - d. General Robert E. Lee, 1908
 - e. “Military Annals of Tennessee” 1883
6. Pamphlets – State Debt, 1879-1882
 - a. “History of the State Debt”
 - b. “Letter of Gov. James D. Porter”
 - c. Report of Committee to confer with the Bondholders
 - d. Report of the Committee on the 50-4 Compromise
 - e. State debt of Tennessee
7. Scrapbook – Newspaper clippings, 1880-1920
8. Scrapbook – Newspaper clippings, 1880-1920